

I.

GENRES AND FORMS

CHAPTER ONE

THE FANDANGO COMPLEX IN THE SPANISH ATLANTIC: A PANORAMIC VIEW

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Abstract

While the Andalusian and best-known forms of fandango share certain distinctive musical features, these same features can be seen to link these subgenres, historically and structurally, to much broader sets of transatlantic musical families, including the eighteenth-century vernacular and semi-classical fandango, older genres like the zarabanda and chacona, a wide family of Caribbean-Basin ternary forms, as well as Andean and South American relatives. At the same time, clear distinctions can be made between genres related to this fandango complex and other major musical families in the Spanish Atlantic.

Keywords

Fandango, zarabanda, flamenco

Resumen

Así como las formas andaluzas más conocidas del fandango muestran ciertos rasgos musicales distintivos, que pueden servir para vincular estos subgéneros, histórica y estructuralmente, a grupos mucho más amplios de las familias musicales transatlánticas, como el fandango popular y el semi-clásico del siglo XVIII, géneros

anteriores como la zarabanda y la chacona, la amplia familia de patrón ternario de la cuenca del Caribe, además de otros géneros andinos y sudamericanos. Mientras tanto, existen diferencias claras entre el complejo del fandango y otras familias importantes en el Atlántico español.

Despite the considerable amount of astute and ongoing scholarship on the fandango in its diverse transatlantic incarnations, the fandango set of musical families remains an unruly and sprawling set of entities. While it may be relatively easy and logical to delineate a “core” fandango family of Andalusian song forms, the distinguishing features of this set of genres are in fact shared, in various ways and to various degrees, with other Spanish and Hispanic American musical genre groups, whether of the present or of previous epochs.

This brief essay suggests a set of analytical parameters and continua for categorization of forms within the fandango family itself. It seeks to posit a “fandango complex” of musically related genres, involving a set of core subgenres structurally linked to sets of larger musical families in Spain, the Hispanic Caribbean, and Latin America as a whole. This taxonomy excludes the numerous Latin American “fandangos” which bear that name only as an indicator of a certain festive event, rather than as denoting specific musical features; at the same time, it seeks to show relations with other genres which are not called “fandango,” and yet which bear clear affinities, in musical terms, with core members of the fandango family.

The fandango, in accordance with its importance in flamenco and in Spanish music as a whole, has been the subject of several erudite studies, primarily by Spanish scholars, including Berlanga (2000), Fernández Marín (2011), and Torres Cortes (2010).¹ The present article attempts to build on the insights and findings of these studies by suggesting, to some extent from a panoramic perspective, some broader ways of organizing and classifying fandango variants in terms of their specific

¹ See also *V Congreso de folclore andaluz: Expresiones de la cultural del pueblo: "El fandango."* 1994. Malaga: Centro de Documentacion Musical de Andalucía (no editor named). The perspectives presented in this essay overlap considerably with those, in this same volume, of Berlanga, whose scholarship is especially noteworthy.

musical features and their relations to other major categories of Iberian and Latin American song. Hopefully subsequent studies may enhance such analyses with choreographic perspectives, which are wholly absent from this inquiry.

Miguel Berlanga, in his aforementioned volume (2000), points out the utility of grouping diverse Spanish fandango variants into two large categories, viz., what he aptly calls the *fandangos del sur* (i.e., of Andalusia), and all the rest. The former category would comprise malagueñas, verdiales, fandango de Huelva, fandango libre, granaínas, tarantas, traditional rondeñas, and other lesser related genres (in their sung rather than solo guitar forms), whether rendered in *aflamencado* (“flamencoized”) style or not. Before the interventions of twentieth-century folklorists and flamencologists, not all these song forms were traditionally designated as “fandangos,” but their retrospective classification as such makes eminent sense in view of their shared formal structure. As has often been described, this structure, in its quintessential form, can be seen to alternate *copla* (verse) sections with instrumental (primarily guitar) interludes, which are here referred to as *ritornellos* (though in modern flamenco discourse they would be called *entrecopla*); these consist primarily of passages which themselves have been variously labeled *variaciones*, *diferencias*, or (in modern flamenco guitar playing) *falsetas*. The *ritornellos* (in, for example, what guitarists would call *por arriba* tonality) often outline Am-G-F-E (iv-III-II-I) patterns in the “Andalusian tonality” of E Phrygian major, while the *coplas* would be in the common-practice key of C major, with the progression C-F-(G7)-C-G7-C-F [-E], in which the final F chord marks the dramatic climax and serves as a modulatory pivot to the Phrygian major tonality of the *entrecopla*.

Grouping the Andalusian fandangos in a discrete *fandango del sur* category is logical, and clearly consistent with vernacular discourse and understanding among Spanish musicians themselves. At the same time, analysis

of the specific musical features defining this category reveals how its borders are best seen as porous rather than rigid, such that the fandango as a formal entity spills over in various directions, whether in terms of geographic ambitus, social strata, or historical epoch.

In categorizing the *fandango del sur* variants in relation to each other, as well as to other genres to which they are linked, it is useful to approach fandango forms in terms of a set of particular parameters and continua. One of these would distinguish fandango as a dance genre (or a musical genre intended to accompany dance) or, alternately, as a listening-oriented genre. Thus, for example, the early historical references to fandango, from 1705 on, describe it primarily as a dance, suggesting that its purely musical features may have been unremarkable. Similarly, as Berlanga (2000) notes, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the *fandangos del sur* flourished primarily, and most characteristically, in the context of festive, informal, participatory *bailes de candil* ("candle-lit dances"). Stylized (and *aflamencado*) versions of such dances (such as *verdiales*), with their musical accompaniment, were also performed on stage in the *cafés cantantes* which, in the latter 1800s, constituted focal sites for the evolution of flamenco. As has been documented, during this period singer-guitarist Juan Breva popularized the *malagueña* as a sort of listening-oriented counterpart to the *verdiales*; by the early twentieth century, the soloistic flamenco forms of *granaínas*, *tarantas*, and the free-rhythmic fandango libre also came to be cultivated as quasi-art-songs for listening rather than social dance. For its part, the classicized, pre-composed *fandangos de salón*, whether written for keyboard (like that of Antonio Soler) or for guitar (like that of Dionisio Aguado), were also presumably conceived as listening-oriented, stylized versions of the contemporary dance-oriented fandango.²

² However, it is conceivable that such *fandangos* as that attributed to Scarlatti (which was not included with the sonatas he eventually published) may have been played for social

Another analytical parameter involves the relative importance—or the very presence or absence—of the *copla* and ritornello sections in fandango variants. Most of the *fandangos de salón*, such as those attributed to Soler and Scarlatti (or for that matter, those of Mozart and Boccherini), consist solely of ritornellos, or more specifically, a string of *variaciones* or *diferencias* set to a Dm-A chordal ostinato. In their non-teleological, isorhythmic repetition of two or three chords in ternary meter, these pieces resembled the earlier *zarabanda*, *chacóna*, and *pasacalle*. It is quite likely that the contemporary vernacular fandangos that the *fandangos de salón* imitated were also structurally similar, perhaps consisting of chords strummed, with some characteristic variations, by an amateur Afro-Hispanic guitarist or vihuelist, whether in Spain or Mexico (then New Spain). For their part, the fandangos de Huelva and assorted fandango variants performed to *abandolao* strumming rhythm in the *bailes de candil* may have contained both *copla* and ritornello in balanced emphasis. As expressive free-rhythmic flamenco renderings of fandangos were cultivated in the early 1900s by vocalists Antonio Chacón, Enrique el Mellizo and others, emphasis shifted to the *copla*, and the ritornello took the form of free-rhythmic guitar *falsestas*, with some atavistic articulations of iv-III-II-I chords and occasional ternary-meter passages. The *copla* assumed the greatest emphasis in the mature flamenco malagueña, where the “ritornello” is reduced to a few guitar *falsestas* introducing the long-winded rendering of a single vocal *quintilla*.

A third analytical continuum is that distinguishing

dancing even in court festivities. It is easy to imagine a court soirée in which Scarlatti, having played a few sonatas, is requested to play a fandango, so that all could dance. The fandango manuscript attributed to him might consist of a student's recollection of how the maestro used to improvise *diferencias* on such occasions.

Some scholars have questioned the authorship of the fandango attributed to Soler.

the fandango rendered either as a participatory “folk” idiom, or, alternately, as a “cultivated” form of art song or piece performed by trained professionals for a discriminating audience. The category of “cultivated” fandangos would comprise two classes of performers. One would be the classical performers—musically literate, versed in formal music theory, and sustained by elite patrons. Another class—in some respects closer to the participatory “folk” milieu of the *bailes de candil*—would be the flamenco performers, who although professionals performing for paying audiences, had no need of formal theory beyond the oral tradition they would informally learn. A prodigious socio-musical gulf could separate the periwigged harpsichordist at the Bourbon court from the illiterate, lumpen-proletarian Andalusian—perhaps a *gitano*—strumming a guitar or singing at a family fiesta in some humble cave. However, as has been pointed out, there has always existed a fluid continuum between these two realms, which has long been traversed in both directions by musicians and musical forms.

Looking at the fandango complex in terms of these various analytical continua may help us specify formal relationships between individual *fandango del sur* subgenres as well as related genres outside this core, some of which may not be called “fandango” but are nevertheless clearly linked. For example, understanding the fandango as an entity alternating *copla* and ostinato-based ritornello sections highlights its clear affinities with the Cuban *punto guajiro*, especially as sung in its most familiar *punto libre* form in the western part of that island (see Linares 1999:26-35). Like *fandango del sur* forms, the *punto libre* consists of verses sung in free rhythm, to a standard chordal accompaniment, alternating with instrumental ritornellos that reiterate simple chordal ostinatos in ternary meter (typically played on guitar, *bandurria*, or other instruments). The verses consist of ten-line *décimas* rather than *quintillas*, and the accompanying chord progression differs from that of the *fandango del sur*, but the length is similar, the alternating *copla*-ritornello formal structure is the same, and the

ritornello—in what is variously called the *tonada triste*, *carvajal*, or *española* form—may even consist of a fandango-like iv-III-II-I or Dm-A-type ostinato (though a major do-fa-sol chordal ostinato is more common).³ Hence, while it may be difficult to reconstruct in detail the evolution of the *punto* form, that genre must be recognized as a close cousin of the *fandango del sur*.

If many Latin American entities bearing the name “fandango” have no structural relation to the *fandango del sur*, there is reasonable evidence linking the fandango mentioned in numerous eighteenth-century sources to the Andalusian fandango forms that emerge into historical daylight in the mid-nineteenth century. Aside from choreographic similarities, both the *fandango del sur* and its eighteenth-century predecessors—as documented in stylized versions like that of Santiago de Murcia—prominently feature the ritornello based on a chordal ostinato (in the Dm-A or Am-E configuration). It is certainly easy to imagine sung verses being added to such ritornellos, as in genres such as the *joropo* or *son jarocho*. By the same token, once the link between the Andalusian fandango and its eighteenth-century counterpart is acknowledged, this expanded fandango family must by extension be seen as part of a broader family of

³ As discussed elsewhere (Manuel 2002), the chords in such configurations should not be seen as tonic and dominant, nor do they necessarily conform to Andalusian Phrygian tonality; rather, for example, the Dm-A (or even D-G-A) ostinato is best seen as a pendular oscillation between two chords of relatively equal weight (although concluding by convention on the A major chord, which should not be labeled “the dominant”). See Manuel 1989 for a discussion of Andalusian Phrygian tonality in the broader Mediterranean context.

The Cuban town of Trinidad is the home of a voice-and-percussion genre called “fandango,” which, like many New World entities bearing this name, has no musical features linking it to other fandangos (see Frias 2015).

Note that the *punto guajiro*’s form of setting a verse to a conventional chord progression corresponds to other Renaissance entities such as the *passamezzo moderno* and the “Guárdame las vacas” progression.

seventeenth-century predecessors, such as the *zarabanda* and *chacón* (and perhaps the *pasacalle*). Like the fandango, these emerged as vernacular dances—presumably with characteristic accompanying music—in the New World. Also like the later fandango, and in accordance with their likely Afro-Latin origins, they evidently consisted of endlessly reiterated chordal ostinatos in ternary meter (in which form they were incorporated into the European Baroque).

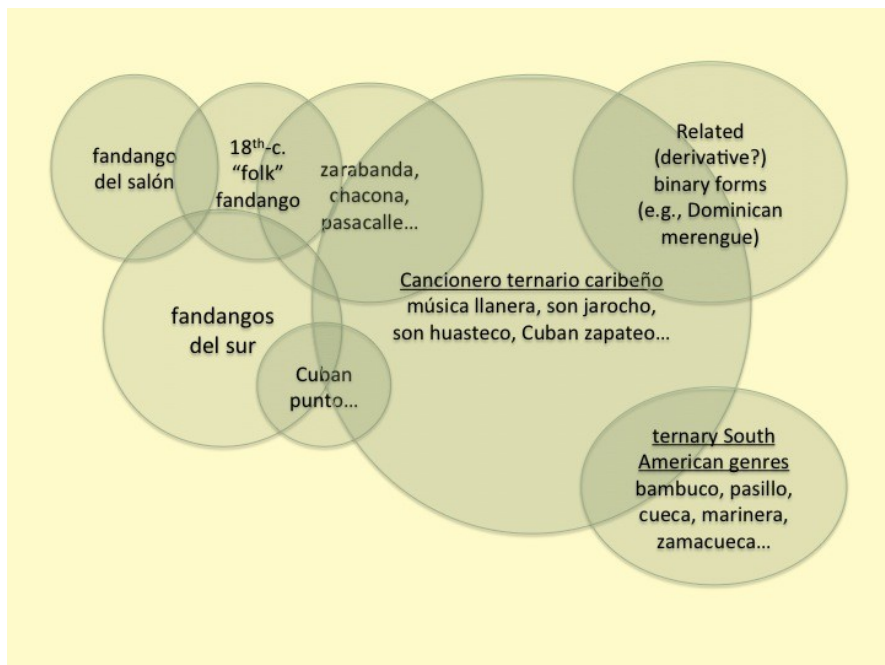
Despite common origins in an early-eighteenth-century vernacular Afro-Latin namesake, the *fandango de salón* and the Andalusian fandangos might be seen as representing a subsequent bifurcation into two quite distinct musical families, distinguished not only by their respective social milieus, but also by the presence of the sung *copla* in the latter set of genres. However, although the notated *fandangos de salón* were instrumental rather than vocal, those of both keyboardist Félix Máximo López (1742-1621) and guitarist Dionisio Aguado (composed in 1836) contain *copla* sections, in harmonies nearly identical to that of the conventional Andalusian fandango,⁴ and even Antonio Soler's contains a brief but conspicuous *copla*-like excursus into the relative major key. All of these would seem to constitute stylized evocations of verse sections in the "folk" fandangos of southern Spain.

If the colonial-era, transatlantic fandango-zarabanda complex can be seen to ramify into the peninsular *fandango de salón* and *fandango del sur*, at the same time it is also inseparable from a broader set of genres which García de León (2002) calls the *cancionero ternario caribeño* ("Caribbean ternary-metered repertory"). This category comprises a variety of related genres based on two- or three-chord ostinatos set to ternary meter, with pervasive hemiola/sesquialtera,

⁴ The *copla* section in Máximo López's "Variaciones del Fandango Español" may be heard at 1:00 on the CD (of the same title) by harpsichordist Andreas Staier (Teldec 3984-21468-2). See Castro 2014, vol. 1: 216-17. See also Fernández Marín (2011:42) for discussion of Aguado's fandango.

combining 3/4 and 6/8 meters either simultaneously or sequentially. Such genres, found both in coastal and inland regions of the Caribbean Basin, would include such genres as the *son jarocho* and *son huasteco* of Mexico, the *joropo* and *galerón* of Venezuela and Colombia, and the Cuban *zapateo*. Meanwhile, this musical family is itself taxonomically inseparable from a kindred set of ternary-metered, sesquialtera-laden Andean and southern cone genres, such as the Colombian *bambuco*, the Ecuadorean *pasillo*, the Chilean *cueca*, the Peruvian *marinera*, and the Argentine *chacarera*. Finally, as has been noted (e.g., Pérez 1986), Hispanic ternary genres, under evident Afro-Latin influence, have tended over time to morph into duple-metered ones, in a grand process of binarization. Hence, even if modern genres such as cumbia, salsa, bachata, and reggaetón may have evolved primarily from musical families separate from the fandango complex, to some extent some of them might also represent a binarization of rhythms within that complex itself. As such, it may not be entirely inappropriate to regard even such genres as the modern commercial Dominican merengue as genetically related to the fandango complex. As a result of these considerations, the fandango complex must be seen as part of a vast, heterogeneous, and rather disorderly extended family of musical forms, which can be graphically represented as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The fandango complex in the Spanish Atlantic



The reader may be suspecting by now that this analysis has distended the notion of the fandango to the extent that it has become at once an all-encompassing and effectively meaningless category. Hence it may be useful at this point to enumerate various significant Hispanic and Latin American music families that are fundamentally *distinct* from the fandango complex in terms of both structural features and historical evolution. These would include the following:

- the contradance/contradanza family, in its numerous pan-Caribbean variants and derivatives, including the Cuban *contradanza*, *danza*, *habanera*, and *danzón*, West Indian quadrilles, and Dominican creole figure dances such as the *carabiné*;
- narrative, text-driven forms derived from the *romance*, such as the Mexican *corrido* and

ranchera;

- neo-African voice-and-percussion genres, such as Cuban *Santería* and *palo* music, traditional rumba and processional *conga*, Puerto Rican *bomba*, Dominican *palo* music, Haitian *vodun* music, etc.;
- genres deriving from mainstream European (or Euro-American) song forms, including sentimental *canción*, *balada*, Spanish *copla* and *cuplé*, and perhaps the Caribbean bolero;
- in the realm of flamenco, the *guajira*, *rumba*, and other *cantes de ida y vuelta*, as well as *cante jondo* (which, however, may have some roots in stylized renderings of *romance*);
- Christian hymns, *villancicos*, and *salves*; children's songs, work songs, and other miscellaneous genres.

Scholars could no doubt augment this list, as well as point out genres that may straddle some of these categories in terms of style and derivation (such as the Cuban *son*). Nevertheless, this enumeration should suffice to indicate that prodigious amounts of Spanish and Caribbean music genres do fall largely outside the purview of even the most extended and expansive conception of fandango families. Ultimately, one would hope that scholarly taxonomies could impose some order and taxonomic logic on what is otherwise a vast and hopelessly heterogeneous aggregate of Spanish Atlantic musical forms.

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